

TELCON

Mr. Kissinger/President

April 15, 1972 10:25 p.m.

HAK: I am sorry to bother you, but we got some pretty quick action out of our Soviet friends--Dobrynin was in slobbering over me--first of all he had a message from the North Vietnamese for us which was a lot more conciliatory than the one that they gave us in Paris--was also dated a day later and it sort of left the day opened to that proposal you and I discussed this afternoon--if they come on the 24th, we go to the Plenary on the 27th. And they had an alternative suggestion, that maybe they will send their foreign minister to Moscow and it was the softest message that I have ever seen.

RN: And it is dated a day later. Does Dobrynin know that we hit them tonight?

HAK: Oh yes. I had told this to Vorontsov. And that was the second interesting thing, he said, of course, could we ask you this, could we ask you not to escalate the war, because that would make it very difficult--I said all right. As long as there is some prospect, we will wait until we have heard from the North Vietnamese. And he said, what did you mean when you said you are prepared to come to Moscow, but you wanted to have some assurances of complete results. He said all we can promise you is that we can try, we can't promise you the results because we don't know yet what you are going to propose. So he said also Breshnev is the leading man in our country; what if he wants to put something else on the agenda first? I said he may be the leading man in your country, but I have instructions from the President from which I cannot digress. In other words, he said they are very anxious for me to come any way, that Vietnam will be the first agenda item, that they recognize the urgency and considering that in the past they had even refused to pass messages, much less take sides.

RN: Now what is the situation regarding--is there still a possibility that they might do the meeting on the 24th?

HAK: Yes, definitely. Or maybe as a face saver they will say the 25th.

RN: Well, that is fine.

HAK: I also told them, I figured that I might as well go for broke, I told them, look if the meeting doesn't take place by May 1, it isn't worth having it, because then time has run out.

RN: Well, also we are prepared to go, I told you the Russians if they decided not to have you come, then we blockade, you can't play the game any other way.

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HAK: Mr. President, you brought it to this point and no one else would have had the courage to do it.

RN: Well, we are ready to play it out too. Incidentally, if they're meeting is disappointing, we'll blockade too, and through the summit right down the sink too. I don't think they will let that happen.

HAK: He was slobbering so much. Here we are bombing the capitol and near the capitol of one of their close allies according to the peacenik textbook, he should be yelling and screaming. He came to my apartment with a written message for me.

RN: Incidentally, I got Bill before the dinner and he is set to go Monday, hard-lined. He said I understand what we have got to do and I think he realizes the inevitability. I didn't tell him anything except I said look, Bill if this doesn't work, we may have to flush the summit. That shook him. So he'll be hard lined.

HAK: That is also what I told Dobrynin. I said you people completely misunderstood the President--He is a patriot first and he is not looking at political considerations, and he thinks that he is not going to go to Moscow with this thing hanging over his head--and he said of listen we must use restraint, we are great powers. It was really

RN: You think your trip is on.

HAK: The only question is whether we want them to send a special plane--I'm kidding--I mean almost anything.

RN: They won't change their minds, because of the bombing.

HAK: Absolutely not. He said, well, must we promise results--you know that is hard to ask of the Soviet government to promise results we can promise to make an effort and that we will promise--all right it is settled, Vietnam is agenda item one and nothing will be discussed until it is fully covered and you are satisfied. And you can't ask for much more than that. And if they screw us Mr. President, and we then go hard lined when I get back, we'll have done everything -- if we are honest about it, they are helping us a hell of a lot more than we are helping them.

RN: Okay--I have to get back to the Latins.